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Cpy 7 of 7

12 August 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: Dr. Sayre Stevens
Deputy Director for Intelligence

X1A FROM : [redacted]
Chairman, SIGINT Task Force

SUBJECT : CIA Analysts and NSA

Sayre:

1. I spent last week taking a preliminary look, visiting with OSI, OWI, OSR, OER, OPR and OCI. I thought you might be interested in the preliminary findings. They are not unexpected.

2. Almost everyone complains, with varying degrees of emphasis, that:

a. NSA gists are not complete enough and sometimes miss the more important points to be found in the raw transcript;

b. NSA analysis is incomplete, unreferenced and often indiscriminantly mixes SIGINT and collateral;

c. NSA does not like to put out gists or analyses until the NSA analyst is satisfied with the completeness of his data or until he understands the significance of the SIGINT he is gisting. In some cases, this produces delays of sixteen months;

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d. NSA quite often refuses to provide transcripts or "technical" data. When the CIA analyst does get this material, he often must do it "via the back door," relying on his friendship with his counterpart at Fort Meade; and

e. "Back door" information cannot be used in CIA publications except through subterfuge. The information is obtained in advance; the analyst must wait for NSA to publish it. This can introduce significant delay.

3. While the vehemence of complaints vary, five of the nine groups I talked to were pretty damned excited. The two major exceptions were OER and OCI, although OPR China analysts are reasonably well satisfied. OER would like more data but finds NSA analysis generally useful and welcomes its tendency to aggregate data. Nor is timeliness much of a problem to OER. I judge this to be a reflection of OER's greater use of collateral, preference for aggregated data and different emphasis on analytic problems. OCI says that it enjoys a generally excellent relationship with NSA, has no trouble getting the full text of messages and finds the timeliness of NSA reporting good. It does not deal much with military affairs and experiences few of the frustrations expressed by OSR or OWI. This may be because of NSA's interest and better understanding of current intelligence.

4. Asked about the usefulness of stationing an NSA liaison team at CIA, almost everyone agreed this would be helpful in the highly compartmented areas, although some analysts expressed concern whether this would still separate them from data they would like in their own files. They did not find so much utility in the more general COMINT area. The research offices, except for OSR, were enthusiastic about stationing a CIA exploitation team at NSA to carry out the same function there as does IAS at NPIC. OCI itself saw no need for this. OER was also cool since it feels satisfied with the way things are. Everyone was concerned that institutional changes might disturb established analyst-to-analyst relationships.

5. Analysts have not thought too much about the audience for which they are writing. Most agreed that there is a difference between production aimed at the policy maker and production aimed at their production counterparts. When the subject was brought up, most agreed that they often put too much source information into reports for policy makers, the very ones who were most likely to compromise these sources. No one disagreed with allowing NSA to help them reduce this danger, a side benefit of having an NSA team here. No one used the word "censorship."

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6. All of the above judgements are qualitative although numerous and concrete examples of CIA-NSA problems were cited. The Task Force plans to return to the issue later on in its work.

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